



NASA recognized INL employees this week for their contribution to the Pluto New Horizons mission, which launched in 2006. More than 70 INL employees helped fuel, test and deliver the mission's power system.

INL team wins NASA recognition

by Teri Ehresman, *INL Communications*

More than 70 current and former Idaho National Laboratory employees have received a "Group Achievement Award" by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for their efforts as part of the New Horizons mission launch in 2006.

Stephen Johnson, INL Space Nuclear Systems and Technology Division director, accepted the award Oct. 21 on behalf of his employees and then handed out recognition to the INL team.

The citation recognized the group for "outstanding efforts to build and deliver the F-8 Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generator (RTG) for the New Horizons mission to Pluto and beyond."

Work on the project started in late 2004 and ended with the January 2006 successful rocket launch. The team implemented the fueling, testing and delivery of the RTG for the Pluto New Horizons mission. The unprecedented effort involved building and commissioning a new Space and Security Power Systems Facility at the Materials and Fuels Complex, bringing legacy equipment online from the decommissioned facility at Ohio's Mound Facility, staffing and training a new crew and getting the job done under the stringent quality standards expected by the Department of Energy and NASA, according to Johnson.

At the time of the launch, Johnson said, "This launch is a huge accomplishment for the Department of Energy, state of Idaho and our INL family. Workers will be able to look back 10 years from now when images are being received from the first mission to the last planet and say to their grandchildren, 'I built that right here in Idaho.'"

The team consisted of more than 70 people in various roles and positions including engineering, operations, quality assurance, project management and technical writing. He said the team put in numerous hours of overtime, including about three months when work was being completed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The effort included building a nuclear handling facility in Idaho over the winter months, defueling a vintage RTG, fueling a newly produced RTG, conducting acceptance testing, and then transporting the RTG to Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Once the RTG was in Florida, team members provided ground support for the spacecraft.

He said the team completed this project under a timeline shorter than any previous effort in this program.

Employees recognized for their efforts include: Brian Anderson, Jon Anthony, Duane Atwood, James Billman, Jim Blaylock, Jon Bradley, Christian Browning, Dan Brunson, Rodney Bryan, Charles Bushnell, Camile Cervantes, Ricky Chappell, Craig Connor.

Sean Cunningham, Dawn Davidson, Noel Duckwitz, Carla Dwight, Steven Egan, Frank Felicione, LaLove Foster, Robert Gomez, Charles Griffin, Jade Grover, Robert Hanson, David Hendricks, Mark Henry, Ed Howell, Terri Ireland, Willie James.

Marcos Jimenez, Stephen Johnson, Ron Jones, Pat Kern, Steve Killian, Jesse Kirby, Corey Landon, Dennis Larson, Byron Lee, Ron Lee, Kelly Lively, Deawn Marshall, Scott McBride, Jamie Mitchell, Gary Miller, Gregg Moedl, Steve Moody.

Kade Munns, Dave Nobles, Marianne Noy, Robert Parks, Amy Powell, Judee Reed, Kurt Ririe, Robert Ristrem, Ken Rosenberg, Rhett Rovig, Van Sandifer, Lester Scott, Jeffrey Shriver, Rebecca Smith, Robin Stewart, Guy Strayer, Robert Stringer.



RTG coin given to those who helped with the successful launch.

Brian Stucki, Connie Tessmer, Robert Tessmer, Daniel Thomas, Leonard Van Eps, Kelly Webb, Darrel Wheeler, Randall Wheeler, Kelly



INL's Bob Parks, Stephen Johnson, Harold McFarlane and Kelly Lively at the Florida launch of the New Horizons rocket.

Williams and James Wojciechowski.

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